[0056] It should be noted that the agent **104** does not need to log in, according to an alternative embodiment. Instead, the agent **104** indicates that they are present and working (e.g., turns on their computing device or punches in for work). In these embodiments, the universal login module **316** notifies all associated communication servers of the presence of the agent **104** in step **406** and awaits a success or acknowledgement flag in step **408**.

[0057] Referring to FIG. **5***a*, a flowchart **500** of one method for obtaining and maintaining availability status of the agent **104** is shown. In this embodiment, the agent communication devices **204** or the communication servers push their communication status data to the central status device **202**. In step **502**, a predetermined time or event occurs that triggers a status push from the agent communication devices **204** or communication servers. In one embodiment, the event may be startup or login of the agent **104**. That is, when the agent **104** first logs in, a status will be pushed to the central status device **202**. Another event which may trigger a status push, is the receipt of an inbound communication at the agent communication device **204**. Alternatively, a predetermined time interval (e.g., every five minutes) may trigger the status push.

[0058] Upon the status check trigger, the agent communication device **204** or associated communication server sends a communication status update to the central status device **202** in step **504**. Thus, for example, once a voice call is received by the phone **208**, the PBX server **214** sends a communication status indicating that the agent **104** is on a voice call. In another example, the computing device **210** of the agent **104** may send a communication status indicating that the agent **104** is responding to an e-mail or chat message. The communication status may then be stored in the status database **322**, according to some embodiments.

[0059] If a next predetermined time or event occurs in step **506**, then the system determines if the agent associated with the agent communication devices **204** is still logged in or present in step **508**. If the agent is still logged in or present, then a new communication status is sent to the central status device in step **504**. The agent communication devices **204** and/or communication servers will continue to send status updates for the agent until the agent is no longer logged in or present.

[0060] FIG. **5***b* shows a flowchart **520** of an alternative method for obtaining and maintaining status of the agent **104**. In this embodiment, the central status device **202** pulls status data from the various agent communication devices **204** and/or communication servers. In step **522**, a predetermined time or event occurs that triggers a status pull from the agent communication devices **204** or communication servers. In one embodiment, the event may be startup or login of the agent **104**. Another event which may trigger a status pull, is the receipt of an inbound communication at one of the communication servers. Alternatively, a predetermined time interval (e.g., every five minutes) may trigger the status pull.

[0061] In step **524**, the central status device **202** sends a request for communication status to the agent communication devices **204** and/or communication servers, such as the PBX server **214**. Communication status is then received in step **526**. In some embodiments, the communication status is stored into the status database **322**.

[0062] In step **528**, a determination is made as to whether a predetermined amount of time has elapsed or if a next event has occurred, which will trigger another status check of the agent communication devices **204** and/or communication servers. In some embodiments, the central status device **202** will check communication status after a predetermined interval of time (e.g., every 5 minutes). In other embodiments, the central status device **202** will perform a communication status check based on an event. The event may comprise receipt of a new inbound communication. For example, if a new voice call is received from a customer **106**, a request for status from the PBX server **214** (i.e., the event) will trigger the central status device **202** to check communication status of the agents **104** over all the communication servers, devices, and systems. In yet other embodiments, a combination of predetermine elapsed time and event triggers may be utilized.

[0063] It should be noted that while two methods for determining communication status of the agent **104** are provided, alternative embodiments are contemplated. For example, a combination of the methods described in connection with FIG. **5***a* and FIG. **5***b* may be utilized. It should further be noted that each agent **104** may be available to handle more than one inbound communication at the same time. Therefore, for each inbound communication received by the call center **102**, the processes of FIG. **5***a* or FIG. **5***b* may be repeated as needed.

[0064] Referring now to FIG. **6**, a flowchart **600** of an exemplary method for queuing an inbound communication from the customer **106** is shown. In step **602**, the inbound communication is received by the appropriate communication server. For example, a voice call may be received by the PBX server **214**, while an e-mail message is received by the e-mail server **216**.

[0065] In optional step **604**, if the communication server receiving the inbound communication is the communication management server **220**, then the communication management server **220** will process the inbound communication. In exemplary embodiments, the communication management server **220** may create or update an information record associated with the inbound communication. Based on the information record, an appropriate set of one or more agents may be determined to be able to handle the inbound communication. Subsequently, the statuses and profiles of this set of agents may be reviewed.

[0066] For example, the communication management server **220** may receive a voice call from a regular customer (e.g., identified with caller ID). The information record for this customer may be updated to indicate that the customer is calling again with an inquiry. Based on the information record, one or more agents may be identified that have a relationship with this customer (e.g., agents that are assigned to the account). The availability and applicability of this set of agents may then be reviewed in the subsequent steps of this exemplary method.

[0067] In step **606**, the availability of agents **104** are determined. According to one embodiment, the receipt of the inbound communication triggers a communication status check by the central status device **202**, as discussed, for example, in connection with FIG. **5***a* or FIG. **5***b*. In alternative embodiments, the communication status check may occur at any time. For example, the communication statuses of agents **104** may be determined prior to receipt of the inbound communication. In some embodiments, the communication status is stored in the status database **322**. Subsequently, the status module **310** may access the status database **322** to review the current statuses of agents **104** and determine availability of agents **104** to receive inbound communications. In other